

Mineral Industry Surveys

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BISMUTH IN THE FIRST QUARTER 2016

Bismuth imports to the United States for the first quarter of 2016 were 406 metric tons (t), an increase of 24% from those in the fourth quarter of 2015 and a decrease of 38% from those in the first quarter of 2015. The average Metal Bulletin dealer price for bismuth in the first quarter of 2016 was \$4.52 per pound, a 5% decrease from the price in the previous quarter, and a 47% decrease from the price in the first quarter of 2015. During the first quarter of 2016, China remained the dominant source of U.S. bismuth imports, accounting for 277 t, or 68%, of total bismuth imports for the quarter. China reportedly exported a total of 566 t of unwrought bismuth in the first 3 months of 2016, a decrease of 32% from the same period in 2015 (Metal Bulletin, 2016).

Government authorities in Kunming, Yunnan Province, have reportedly determined that illegal activities took place on the Fanya Metals Exchange (FME). The owner of the FME was arrested on February 5. Metal stocks held by the exchange have been heavily monitored by the government since November 2015, and since then, the exchange has ceased operations and producers have not been able to move metal out of FME warehouses. On March 31, the Public Security Bureau said that

they were deepening their investigation into the FME. The FME reported stocks of 19,228 t of bismuth in its warehouses in November, but that amount has not been verified by either the Government or by a third party (Stanway, 2016; Zhao, 2016).

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References Cited

- Metal Bulletin, 2016, China's unwrought bismuth exports rise 247% y-o-y in March: Metal Bulletin, April 25. (Accessed May 20, 2016, via <http://www.metalbulletin.com/>.)
- Stanway, David, 2016, Kunming police say Fanya Exchange used investor savings illegally: Reuters, March 31. (Accessed April 1, 2016, via <http://www.reuters.com/article/china-fanya-idUSL3N1741HH>.)
- Zhao, Ohmin, 2016, Fanya arrest will not release metal stocks: Metal-Pages, February 16. (Accessed May 20, 2016, via <http://www.metal-pages.com/>.)

TABLE 1
SALIENT BISMUTH STATISTICS¹

(Metric tons, unless otherwise specified)

	2015					2016
	Year	1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	4th quarter	1st quarter
Exports ²	519	142	188	110	79	131
Imports for consumption ²	1,950	653	471	501	328	406
Price per pound, dealer, average of period ³	\$6.40 ^r	\$8.60 ^r	\$6.82 ^r	\$5.57 ^r	\$4.76 ^r	\$4.52

^rRevised.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; except prices.

²Bismuth metal and articles thereof, including waste and scrap.

³Source: Metal Bulltin Holdings, 2016.

TABLE 2
U.S. EXPORTS OF BISMUTH METAL, BY COUNTRY^{1,2}

(Kilograms)

Country	2015					2016			
	Year	1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	4th quarter	January	February	March	1st quarter
Belgium	3,530	--	3,530	--	--	--	--	--	--
Brazil	4,860	--	1,290	2,280	1,290	2,820	--	--	2,820
Canada	145,000	57,800	52,500	19,100	16,000	2,580	1,480	1,250	5,310
Chile	3,530	3,020	15	495	--	--	--	--	--
China	63,000	12,100	33,300	8,810	8,830	4,240	--	100	4,340
Costa Rica	1,850	--	405	579	868	--	--	--	--
Dominican Republic	1,240	100	1,140	--	--	--	40	--	40
Ecuador	3,020	580	225	1,930	286	--	--	528	528
France	6,380	44	--	6,340	--	--	--	--	--
French Guiana	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1,690	1,690
Guyana	1,690	1,690	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Hong Kong	47,100	12,200	16,500	13,800	4,650	2,840	370	583	3,790
India	4,770	--	--	1,630	3,140	--	1,200	--	1,200
Israel	1,720	1,720	--	--	--	--	--	1,650	1,650
Japan	2,540	473	--	--	2,070	390	308	--	698
Laos	--	--	--	--	--	--	11,300	--	11,300
Malaysia	6,320	646	2,840	2,840	--	116	62	--	178
Mexico	49,900	19,800	8,350	16,200	5,520	508	1,820	1,660	3,980
Netherlands	2,530	948	474	826	280	--	42,000	--	42,000
Singapore	5,060	150	62	3,670	1,180	386	980	1,710	3,070
Switzerland	1,250	--	--	--	1,250	--	--	--	--
Taiwan	2,070	--	1,580	--	493	--	--	--	--
Thailand	11,400	4,320	4,330	2,770	--	737	552	8,540	9,830
United Kingdom	3,450 ^r	314	2,020	413	694	--	470	--	470
Vietnam	143,000 ^r	26,500	58,900	--	30,400 ^r	21,500	14,300	1,110	37,000
Other	3,570 ^r	14 ^r	245 ^r	27,900 ^r	2,310 ^r	55	72	506	633
Total	519,000	142,000	188,000	110,000	79,200	36,200	75,000	19,300	131,000

^rRevised. -- Zero.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²Bismuth metal and articles thereof, including waste and scrap.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 3
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF BISMUTH METAL, BY COUNTRY^{1,2}

(Kilograms)

Country	2015					2016			
	Year	1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	4th quarter	January	February	March	1st quarter
Belgium	155,000	53,800	39,500	17,000	44,800	27,800	--	34,000	61,800
Canada	6,710	3,380	1,430	755	1,140	361	--	--	361
China	1,680,000	572,000	414,000	475,000	221,000	29,000	122,000	126,000	277,000
Germany	1,860	400	77	1,310	77	622	--	147	769
Korea, Republic of	28,000	--	1,000	--	27,000	10	--	--	10
Malaysia	1,470	1,470	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Mexico	16,400	--	--	--	16,400	19,300	29,400	9,820	58,600
Netherlands	1,570	--	306	632	635	1	42	--	43
United Kingdom	57,600	21,400	14,500	5,730	16,100	--	2,580	4,980	7,560
Other	656	4	62	126	464	154	--	--	154
Total	1,950,000	653,000	471,000	501,000	328,000	77,300	154,000	175,000	406,000

-- Zero.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²Bismuth metal and articles thereof, including waste and scrap.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.